

SENATOR HIGGINS: This amendment, basically, is the same as the others, except now we're down to asking or asking the senators to amend the bill that the insurance companies be assessed for six years, those insurance companies that sell annuities. Some of you were not here when I explained to you how these amendments came up today instead of yesterday. Yesterday I saw the long list of Final Reading bills, and I knew these amendments would take a long time, and it was my hope that there would be a compromise and that Senator Ashford would go dutifully to the people who asked him to introduce the bill and say, how about we raise this to at least 10 years? But that didn't happen. I decided, yesterday, I did not want to put these amendments on there and delay all those bills on Final Reading and on Select File and keeping them from passing this year. Then, today during the lunch hour, Senator Goodrich came up to me and told me that if any of these amendments get adopted, for all intents and purposes, the bill would be killed. Well, I can stand here and tell you in all truthfulness I would love that. I think this...well, Ernie Chambers always calls a bad bill a piece of trash. I would love to see this bill killed, but obviously it is not going to be, no matter how long you plead with anybody, no matter how much you point out the injustice to the people we supposedly represent, no matter how many times you talk about succumbing to the threats of loss of jobs, no matter how much you beg senators to stand tall to tell the insurance companies, threaten us, but we're not going to open the flood gates so that next year other insurance companies will come in, not just those that sell annuities but those that sell other types of insurance will demand the same treatment we're giving you this year, the special consideration, certainly there are companies that employ a great deal more than these three annuity companies. I think Mutual of Omaha is one of the largest employers in Omaha, certainly they've got to be the largest employer of insurance companies. I would hope they would not come in and ask for the same thing that these annuity companies have asked for. I would hope that none of the insurance companies follow suit, but I can't be sure. Because it was my hope, after LB 775 passed last year against my vote, that nobody else would come to this Legislature with the threats that we got last year. But it didn't happen. The insurance companies came in this year, the annuity companies, and they followed the old line, threaten them with job losses. And, of course, those in the rural areas or in greater Nebraska Senator Dierks' prefers, I don't think you'll find many insurance people